



# SOCIAL ACTION

— THE FAMILY —  
COVENANT WITH POSTERITY

By

GRACE LOUCKS ELLIOTT

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February 15, 1942





# SOCIAL ACTION

(A MAGAZINE OF FACT)

Published by the Council for Social Action of the  
Congregational Christian Churches

289 Fourth Avenue

New York City

February 15, 1942

ALFRED W. SWAN, *Chairman*

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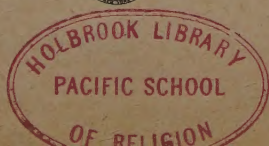
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**SOCIAL ACTION, Volume VIII, Number 2, February 15, 1942.** Published monthly except July and August. Subscription \$1.00 per year; Canada, \$1.20 per year. Single copies, 15c. each; 2 to 9 copies, 12c. each; 10 to 49 copies, 10c. each; 50 or more copies, 8c. each. Registered as second-class matter January 30, 1939, at the Post Office at New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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# —THE FAMILY— COVENANT WITH POSTERITY

BY GRACE LOUCKS ELLIOTT

“We need to think of the home as the cradle into which the future is born, and the family as the nursery in which the new social order is being reared. The family is a covenant with posterity.”

—Sidney Goldstein

The family today is not only a part of a changing world but is being changed by that world. This has been true from the days when “Adam remarked to Eve that they had come to the end of an era,” to the accelerated changes of the present world. Today, forces which are the result of deep-seated human needs and hungers are affecting many phases of man’s life. New patterns for man’s relationships are being worked out in many areas. War is bringing inevitable stress and strain on all relationships and institutions. In such days there are many who say that the home is breaking up and that the family itself is in jeopardy. If this be true, there is occasion for concern. But the fact of change does not necessarily mean the disintegration of that which is being changed. It is important to examine what is happening in order to determine what may be causes for satisfaction as well as for concern in the developments of which we are a part.

Man’s most fundamental need is to belong to his fellows in a cooperative relationship which we may designate as community. He needs to lose the isolation of his individual life in his experiences of relatedness to those who are mutually necessary and important to one another. The basic element of morale for old or young is the individual’s conception of his belonging to his fellows in a significant sense. To be of maximum significance this community must be inclusive at the point of age and



sex. Historically, the two institutions which have been the primary instruments for the satisfaction of this basic human need are the family and the church. They will not be superseded unless they fail to fulfill their functions. How they fulfill those functions is of greatest importance. Because the family is the most formative relationship in the earliest years of an individual's life, the patterns learned in the family influence the direction of social, economic and political life in its wider phases. The family is not only changed by the world but, for good or ill, is a force in shaping the trends and values of the wider life of the world. We are, therefore, in a period when we must search with honesty and integrity into the new forms and functions of the family. If we are able to create new ideals and practices to meet the new day we shall open doors to deeper and richer life for ourselves, for our families, and for the world.

## CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE FAMILY

How memory cuts away the years,  
And how clean the picture comes  
Of autumn days, brisk and busy;  
Charged with keen sunshine.  
And you, stirred with activity,  
The spirit of those energetic days.

. . . . .  
Autumn and dead leaves burning in the sharp air.  
And winter comforts coming in like a pageant.  
I shall not forget them:—  
Great jars laden with the raw green of pickles,  
Standing in a solemn row across the back of the porch,  
Exhaling the pungent dill;  
And in the very center of the yard,  
You, tending the great catsup kettle of gleaming copper,  
Where fat, red tomatoes bobbed up and down  
Like jolly monks in a drunken dance.

. . . . .  
And you moved among these mysteries,

Absorbed and smiling and sure;  
 Stirring, tasting, measuring,  
 With the precision of a ritual.

—From *Autumn (To My Mother)*\*  
 By Jean Starr Untermeyer

In the agricultural economy of our great-grandparents the life of both men and women was largely determined by their economic functions. A man was a farmer, husband, and father, as his wife was the farmer's wife and the children's mother. There was little time or energy left after their necessary economic functions were performed for the development of husband or wife as differentiated individuals with other interests or activities. The functions of many industries were centered in the colonial home. All of the processes for providing clothing were carried on by the family—raising of the wool or flax, spinning, weaving, knitting, sewing, tailoring. All of the food except salt was provided by them—vegetables and fruit were grown, cooked, canned, dried and preserved. Animals were butchered and the meat cured; candles and soap were home-made; shoes and harness were made or at least repaired.

In an agrarian economy a man married not only a wife but a business partner as well, and children at a very early age contributed to the family income. Families were large, as may be seen by reading family records, and children were an economic asset. Social life centered in the home where work could become



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an occasion like a quilting party, a husking bee, or a syrup boil. Barn dances and sleigh rides were family parties.

Education was provided to a large extent within the family unit. The formal education of a few months at school was much less important than the basic skills learned by the boys and girls as they worked with their parents at a common enterprise. Manual training, physical education, and domestic science were provided in shop and kitchen. Religious education as well was carried on at home, for the most part, around family altars and through a father's or mother's instruction.

The pioneer home has ceased to be. The industrial revolution and the rise of capitalism have changed the family from a self-sufficient economic unit to a consuming group in a highly complicated economic system. Factory towns and urban communities have preempted the economic functions of the family unit. In this transition the work done by men was taken out of the home, and men went with it to work, not for themselves, but for employers.

The same industrial development which took men's work out of the home has tended further to modify the family organization by taking women out of the home in increasing numbers. It is not safe longer to assume that the man's wage is a family

wage. Often the wife's earnings must be added to those of the husband to make possible a healthful living standard. Where a bare minimum can be met by the man's wage, the woman's wage may be necessary if there are to be any cultural advantages or recreational activities within the family itself. According to the preliminary figures of the 1940 census,



there are 11,148,940 women over 14 years of age gainfully employed. This represents one-fourth of the female population. In a war period it becomes necessary for women to replace men at more and more kinds of work. The estimate that it takes fourteen workers to maintain every soldier means the service of the total working population for civilian and war production. No one can foresee as yet what further changes this period will make in the work life of women.

When the economic structure of the family was broken, its stability was threatened because its members no longer worked cooperatively, but apart from one another and often as competitors. Whether those who went out from the home went into industrial, business, or professional pursuits, they were no longer fellow workers with members of their own households. Also, the skills which were once the personal possession of the individual came to lack value as they were replaced by machine processes. Many individuals became "landless, horseless, toolless, skillless" cogs in an industrial machine. Though in the former economy the family got up at sunrise and went to bed early, the long hours held varied work and were less monotonous than the shorter hours of modern factory employment. In an industrial economy, jobs are less permanent than when individuals owned their own pieces of earth. Fewer and fewer families continue to live in the homes in which they were born. Business tends to shift its managers from place to place by planes or moving vans, while their disinherited brothers wend their disillusioned ways on foot or in jalopies. The demands of defense industries intensify this situation by the separation of men from the family unit, by the creation of trailer and boom towns and by the crowding of urban centers. Different shifts of work make it impossible for some families to plan to do anything together. Family life will be threatened and often broken by all of these pressures. But, during the transition period when this problem is with us, we must face the more permanent as well as the temporary elements which are involved in the relation of economic factors to the well being of the family. Even though changes in



the economic function of the family have affected its life in ways that have been indicated, there is still the necessity and the opportunity for the family to build its life on a cooperative economic basis.

The new situation involves certain basic adjustments in family life. First, the new relationship of women to the family economy must be recognized. The question we have to face is not whether married women ought to work. Woman's contribution to the economic support of the family is no new thing under the sun. We now need to question honestly under what conditions woman's work can be done in order to make for the greatest good for herself and for the family to which she bears a woman's responsibility. Probably no one item of material arrangements in marriages of the past has been the source of more difficulty and strain than the wife's lack of economic independence. The failure of her husband to recognize that her services in the home were often worth in money value at least half of the man's income, and her constant need to ask her husband for money and to have it given as a favor, have resulted in many habits of dishonesty and of indirection on the wife's part and, sometimes, in bitter resentment.

This shifting of women from work in the home to work outside the home has not been the result of their conscious and deliberate revolt against prevailing social customs or attitudes. As was true for the men just a short time earlier, work outside the home has been forced upon them because of the changed conditions in the present order. Even before the great depres-



sion, studies tended to show that as high as 90 per cent of women working were doing so because of necessity. The added precariousness that men have faced in both getting and holding a job in the last decade has made it even more imperative for women to have a means of supplementing the man's wage if necessary. Many women who are called upon to do jobs necessary for defense do them with great resistance. Their insistence, before the declaration of war, that they prefer marriage to working at any kind of a job will not be fundamentally changed by the necessities forced upon them. Many women workers—while participating in the new order—hold the older social attitudes and honestly feel that "woman's place is in the home," even when their work forces them out of the home. This feeling is often a handicap in the development of newer and sounder attitudes towards their new functions. Hence, women must often face the strain of the new adjustment without the re-inforcement that might come through an understanding of the social process of which they are inevitably a part.

One of the difficulties that must be faced in relation to a woman's working outside the home is the man's attitude towards her work. One often hears that "a man cannot keep his self-respect and allow his wife to work." This is true if, because she works, he takes no responsibility for the family support. But his attitude may indicate that he has not recognized that women have always contributed to the support of the family; he may be unwilling to admit that work away from home may not be so arduous or monotonous as is work within the home. Or it may only mean that he has not yet given thought to the new adjustments which must be made by his generation in contrast with the accepted role of his mother. Again, it is sometimes held by men that a woman cannot respect a man who cannot support his family. But too often in the past the man's apparent magnanimity in insisting upon supporting his wife and family has been accompanied by subjection and domination. Many of the chivalrous clichés about women are sentimental coverings for lack of intellectual honesty and of emotional in-



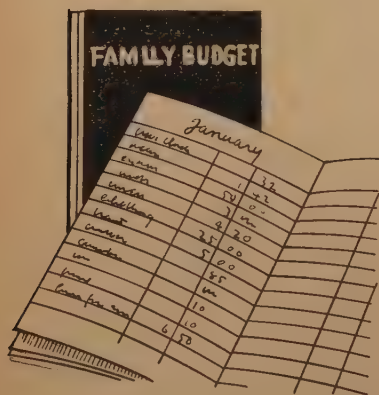
tegrity. Woman's "priceless position" in a price society is not always an enviable situation. Likewise those things done for "love" have often become the basis of demands and exactions disastrous to the relationship between husband and wife. Often a boy makes the statement that he will not marry a girl until he can support her. This ought at least to be a mutual decision; for if he does not marry her, she may have to work anyway and should have some part in deciding whether she would rather work when married to him or as an unmarried woman.

The objection most frequently raised at present to married women's working outside the home is that they should not have jobs while there are so many unemployed men and single women needing work. This objection can have validity only if the wage of the married men is adequate for the demands of their families. So long as it is not adequate in many cases, society should not attempt to solve its larger employment problem by confusing it with a family problem.

It is necessary, also, to recognize that individuals cannot stand alone in a system in which collective bargaining is a necessary element. Whenever women at work undercut men's wages or refuse to accept their social responsibilities to their fellows in the vocational realm, they are showing signs of immaturity and of irresponsibility, dangerous for the family as well as for society. If women work, they must carry their full share of responsibility for others with whom they work. This means that women, as well as men, must face the questions of labor organization. In a society as potentially rich as is ours, we can and must learn to make use of the work of all workers, if life is to contribute to the welfare of all.

Second, if the economic basis of marriage is to be sound it must be a real partnership. Such a partnership necessitates the making of a budget together. A budget is not an expense account but a program for spending and represents planned living. To look at a budget is to discover what is most worthwhile to those who make it. It means that one does less of this to do

more of that. The process of budget making with its emphasis on cooperation and mutual consideration is its real contribution to marriage. Material assets may be a framework within which husbands and wives prefer to build their joined lives, but,



faced with choices as we all are, it is important to remember that our personal bookkeeping is not in terms of dollars and cents. A joint bank account may be the form which serves to remind its users of the spirit of the arrangement. (Adapted from Janet Nelson, "Money and Marriage," in *Social Action*, March, 1941.) A budget should be based on the joint salaries if both are earning them. If the hus-

band's salary must pay the rent and the items lacking any glamour while the wife's supplies the extras, there is likely to be more difficulty if her salary is or should become larger than his. With a joint budget, an increase of salary for either means a better chance to have what both plan for. Any mature consideration of the bases of money return for services must recognize that in some lines of work the returns are based on other satisfactions than those of money, and any two people who are mature enough to marry should be able to recognize that many factors other than personal ability go to determine salary scales.

Third, certain readjustments in family life are necessary if the home under modern conditions is to be successful. If both husband and wife work outside the home, it would seem to follow that both would share in the work of the home. Too often in any arrangement where the wife is employed out of the home, it is assumed that she carries in addition the work



inside it. Many a woman has not been able to stand the physical and emotional demands of the two jobs. In any arrangement it will probably be necessary for her to carry a major part of the responsibility for the management of the home. But if she as well as her husband works outside the home, there should be a sharing of the work inside, or else provision in the family budget to cover part of the home work.

This sharing of home responsibilities by husband and wife has been difficult to secure because of the extent to which the roles of men and women have been fixed, as if there were an impassable gulf between them, and as if no man without loss of self-respect could do what has been designated as woman's work. But aptitude for most of the work of the home would seem to be rather a matter of individual than of sex difference. There is no real reason to assume that cooking is inherently woman's work when all of the highest paid chefs are men, or that sewing can be done only by women when the highest paid designers and tailors are men. Neither does there seem to be a valid reason for assuming that washing and ironing, scrubbing and sweeping are better fitted to women's physical capacities than to men's. Boys in many progressive schools, where the old assumptions are not made, prefer to take cooking rather than "shop" while many of the girls choose the shop. Many a man might stay at home more willingly if he ate his own instead of his wife's cooking. Many a home would be more tastily furnished if the man had chosen the furniture and the color scheme for the decoration. Many children would be more becomingly dressed if their fathers chose their clothes. An eye for line and color is an individual, rather than a sex, difference. In the new partnership between men and women, there must be joint planning and joint responsibility for the things in the home that are the outward and visible signs of inner unity.

If the family is to be a cooperating unit, economic partnership in the home must include the children as well as the father and mother. Children are now an economic burden for a much

longer time and have almost lost the function they formerly had as contributing units of the pioneer family. Their economic dependence tends in many instances to become an emotional liability as well. But children may be led to see how, in efficiently carrying out their responsibilities in home and school, they are potentially earning and so have a right to help plan a budget on a sharing basis. Wise training in the handling of money is one of the home's most important contributions to children and is very closely related to their growth in the management of themselves. After children reach their teens, they should cooperate in determining such items of the family expense as food, rent, tuition, insurance, medical care, contributions, and the like. This involves facing with their parents readjustments in the budget made necessary by decreases in income. It also involves planning for modifications in expenditures necessary for the purchase of an item of equipment, in saving for a home, or in planning for a college education.

Children need also to learn the value and use of money through shopping with their parents before they are given the entire responsibility of buying for themselves. They need to



know when to buy and when to delay purchases; when to buy and when to save. They need to have experience in earning and in the use of an allowance. This kind of training helps the child to make the transition from economic dependence a gradual one and so enables children to assume adult family obligations with a kind of experience that will make for confidence and security.





## CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE FAMILY

But the law of life is change; nothing continues the same for any length of time; happiness must become unhappiness and will be succeeded again by the joy it had displaced. The past must also be reckoned with; it is seldom as far behind us as we could wish; it is more often in front, blocking the way, and the future trips over it just when we think that the road is clear and joy our own.

—James Stephens

With the changes in the economic aspects of family life have come changes in its social structure and function. Once there was space in the home for two or three generations, for maiden aunts and grandmothers, for friends and strangers. The cost of space has led to "a constant clipping process" which began with the elimination of out-buildings, of yards and lawns, and of front porches. There are fewer spare rooms for the entertainment of relatives, of guests, and of "angels unawares." There is no space for the family gods, for the picture of great-grand-

father, for grandmother's big canopy bed or the what-not that stood in the corner. There is less and less space for children. The exchange of the back fence for the elevator has not increased friendliness in proportion to the numbers one must meet, but makes rather for the isolation that finds crowds the best



place to be alone. (Adapted from the symposium, *The Family and Its Functions*, Child Study Association.) Not only are individuals isolated from one another, but age groups are more separated. Young people have more groups of their own age to attend but less and less time to be at home with the family. Even if the family happens to be at home for meals together, the radio is fre-

quently a substitute for table conversation.

The long hours of work in the past left little time or energy for recreational interests for many people. Now, the same factors that have caused economic insecurity have been making for shorter working hours. Men are finding leisure, for the first time since they went out of the home, to be with their families. The drudgery of the work of the home is being increasingly eliminated. However, one of the most serious problems in unemployment or in shorter hours of work is the lack of equipment of most people to use the time at their disposal constructively. However much this situation may be changed temporarily by the pressure of war production, it needs to be taken into account in any long-time perspective upon family life.

As individuals have come to sell their labor in the modern economy, they have come to buy their play. They now buy seats at a theatre or concert hall and eat their food before and after



the performance from some chef's kitchen. But all this leaves much to be desired from the angle of family life. Few plays or pictures are interesting to all members of the family. Even when they buy outdoor instead of indoor seats, they are spectators instead of participants in what they are enjoying. They have too little to do with their hands; and less use for large muscles which are often not employed in the vocational pursuits of working hours. Instead of walking, people use a car. In Middletown, the Lynds found that the car was one of the family possessions most infrequently given up, whatever other financial adjustments the family had to make. And a car can be the source of severe family discord.

In a war period, all the normal social life of the family tends to be dislocated. Tensions are increased in many ways for all members of the family. Family units are broken; there is fear for the safety of those who are absent, if not for those who are together. Furthermore, the uncertainty about the continuance of jobs after the emergency induces restlessness and anxiety. All of these tensions make the need of relaxing recreation more imperative.

But the picture need not be discouraging. It is possible for individuals to choose their avocations with the same thought



they once gave to their choice of vocation, and to give sufficient time and attention to their avocations so that they feel a sense of achievement and creation. These avocations can be family enterprises. The hobby, which was once a time-filler, can become a medium of self-expression for individuals and for groups. An entire family can become interested in stamps, in butterflies, or in minerology. Many families are discovering fun and new insights in the out-of-doors. Picnics, where each has a share in preparing and cooking meals and where the knowledge and appreciation of nature can be shared, provide experiences of shared work and play with great potential values. Cars become an asset in such enterprises and make possible longer periods in places where there is an opportunity for the comradeship that comes from hiking, fishing, or camping together.

Much of the resistance to the suggestion of playing games, or to any of the more active forms of recreation, is due to the fact that few have the skill to get fun out of the experience. Whether or not there is space for outdoor games, indoor ones like ping-pong, or even checkers and chess, can be played by age and youth together. Families can plan together for space for cooperative recreation as well as for cooperative machinery for service enterprises.

The family should arrange to be together for some of the day's meals. It can be fun to make and keep engagements with one's own family. These times together should be planned for as one would plan engagements with other friends. It is a good idea to "dress up" for one's family. Some families very much enjoy reading together things of interest to all the members such as "I Married Adventure" or "Wind in the Willows." Some families like to sing and play together, and have found no end of delight in family vocal or instrumental ensembles. The repartee in conversation between adults and children often proves to be of great value in preparing each to be interesting in wider circles. It is good practice to try one's jokes or his sleight-of-hand on the family. Square dances, learned by all of

the family, may lead to a community provision for a place where people may dance. Ten-year-olds can dance most of the figures that forty-year-olds enjoy and find added enjoyment because of the age differences.

Homes should be the places where friends are welcome and where they can be included in the family activities. Children's friends inevitably make for some noise and disorder, but such inconvenience is small price for the knowledge parents have of where their children are and of what they are doing. Cookie jars and refrigerators which can be raided without undue protest may save children from eating much less desirable food in much less desirable places. As children grow older and come to choose their mates, it is much easier to choose wisely if suitors and sweethearts have been introduced into the family circle.

## PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE FAMILY

The home is the place where an individual can most easily be "taught love by feeling human love; taught wisdom by the way in which he lives; taught to love all mankind, and serve them fair, by seeing from his birth all children served with the same righteous, all-embracing care."

—Charlotte Perkins Gilman

However much the economic function of the family is modified, its primary contribution to the life of its members still continues to be provision for the basic experience of belonging to one another. The affectional functions, comprising the love relationship between husband and wife, and the relationship of parents and children, are still left to the home. They have been taken over by no other agency or institution. In the family, the individual is offered an opportunity for intimacy of contact, for mutuality of interests and concerns, and for the give and take of mutual responsibility upon which the development of healthy personality depends.



Sound relationships between husband and wife are basic to the well-being of the family. We have now come to understand the fallacy of the assumption that, if individuals make a good marriage choice, they will of necessity live happily ever after. Only those individuals who are mature enough to accept a continuing responsibility for the marriage relationship for richer or poorer, for better or worse, in sickness and in health, can hope for happiness or fulfillment. Much has been said to the effect that, if there are no children, marriage is a personal relationship between two individuals in which society is not involved. Society does, however, have a stake, whether or not it be a legal one, in the relationship of any two individuals; for no one lives unto himself. The body of society is affected, for good or ill, by the creative or disintegrative experience of any of its members.

Marriage, which provides man with a refuge from his incapable loneliness, can be sound only as it makes for a widening of the relationship between two individuals to include their larger need of the world and the world's need of them. Any relationship turned in upon itself tends to destroy itself and in turn the society of which it refuses to be a part.

One of the necessary elements of the relationship of husband and wife is their sexual adjustment to one another. This is much simpler in the present day because, for the first time, adequate information regarding the biological, physiological, and psychological aspects of sex is available to young people before and after they marry. But sex adjustment does not come ready-made, even for those who are well informed and romantically and passionately in love. It is an art which must be learned, as is any other skill, by practice. Sex life for married partners begins to lose its significance if they begin to take each other for granted; if they substitute things they give or do for one another for their relationship to one another; or if they fail to be aware of, or to call forth in one another, that which once made the relationship vital and creative. In spite of the difficulty of complicated schedules and increasing responsibilities, they dare not cease to

take time to love one another. If that love is kept in flame, it illumines all other experiences. Then difficulties and even pain shared by both, or sacrifices made by both for a common goal, will cement their relationship.

Since personal relationships are in general of greater importance to women than to men, the success of these relationships depends in large measure on women's ability to face the reality of all those situations of which they are a part with the creative insight of a love which can distinguish between the trivial and the important. The mutuality of interests, which once was provided automatically in the common tasks of the pioneer home, now has to be maintained despite the separation of work and often of leisure hours. Now that men are being taken away from the home for longer periods, if not for life, the woman may have to be both mother and father to her children.

Drastic changes in income or social position are now being experienced by many families in the present unstable economic situation, and we are increasingly aware both of their negative and positive effects in family life. Some families come through a crisis in their lives with a sounder and more vital relationship between family members than ever existed in easier times, while in others there have been disclosed unrecognized conflicts sometimes so deep as to break the families apart. In each case the fundamental relationships have come nearer to the surface. An individual who has security within himself can face loss of external security with less likelihood of disastrous results than can the already insecure individual. Those who have within themselves that which cannot be taken from them are not ruined by the ravages of depression or war. Such security within the family requires the mutual interdependence of the members of the family upon one another as persons. In this mutuality, each must continue to develop his own personality and contribute his own uniqueness to the relationship that binds him to others.

If women are to fulfill their share of responsibility to the life of the family, we need to consider some of the new problems facing them as they try to find satisfaction for their personality

needs and to make the contribution for their day that their grandmothers made for theirs. Even when women are not forced by the needs of the family to go outside to work, they have to face the loss of significant vocational responsibilities in the home which were once automatically provided for their mothers and grandmothers. The kind of reward which comes from vocational responsibility carried on with personal satisfaction and social recognition is necessary to women as well as to men. So long as the family's major needs for food and clothing, education and recreation, were provided within the home, woman's vocational expression was assured. When she provided for her larder, or made her children's clothes, she not only met economic needs but found creative expression for her personality and received society's recognition of her accomplishments. This was true for the work of maiden aunts as well as for that of their married sisters, for the constant child-bearing of the married called for the energies and skills of the unmarried as a supplement in the household economy.

The degree to which economic, social and leisure time activities were coordinated into a social whole, intimately connected with the daily process of living, was the measure of the emotional and intellectual satisfaction which woman's activity



produced. In the modern home the woman is robbed of a major part of this vocational satisfaction by the development of labor saving devices and by the removal of so many functions from the home through service industries. Hornell Hart states that in 1930, one out of every five meals was eaten away from home, beside the simplification of additional meals





whose food is prepared by the delicatessen and the factory. Two-thirds of the farm homes and 90 per cent of the city homes use baker's bread. Jams, jellies and preserves, which are at least close rivals to the best of the former home-made articles, are now available in stores almost as cheaply as they can be put up at home. Such use of food materials gives little opportunity to develop or to show one's skill. Laundries now do the washing and ironing for great numbers of families and, even where laundry is done in the home, labor-saving devices have reduced the work involved. No longer does the beautiful ironing of ruffles, fluting, and accordion pleats proclaim a woman's skill. There is now small incentive for women to make their own or their children's clothes. Readymade clothes cost but little more, and it is difficult for most women to compete successfully in design and workmanship with the work of the factory.

Any woman who lived in a ten-room house and had ten children had a full-time job, but at present few of the young people who are thinking of marriage will have either ten rooms or ten children. This is especially true for the young married woman who lives in an apartment or house whose

size or equipment does not provide opportunity for enough activity to use up more than a fraction of the energy she may have at her command. To take care of a two- or three-room apartment and to cook for a husband who is at home for not more than two meals a day, is hardly a job for a girl of average ability and strength. The college graduate who plays bridge and goes to the movies to put in the time does not offer a happy picture from the angle of her own development, or from the angle of her relation with a husband who may have to work overtime to give her the leisure she cannot use in creative or productive activity. Society can ill afford to sponsor a parasitic or non-productive existence for women.

There is a common assumption that there is volunteer work waiting for this kind of person; she can secure her vocational satisfaction in joining some worthy organization. But the nature of most of the volunteer work open to women without professional training is not of the kind to offer either personal or social satisfaction. Not yet have most volunteer jobs been analyzed with sufficient thought to give a real chance for creative expression to the individual undertaking them. Nor has the attitude of the volunteer towards her responsibility, if weather or her inclination is unfavorable, been developed to the point where she is likely to find real satisfaction in what she does.



At the other extreme from the woman who has not enough demanded of her, is the woman whose responsibilities are too heavy or too monotonous. Vocational satisfaction is impossible for the over-worked. When there are too many demands for the woman's strength, the life

of the family must suffer because of her frayed nerves and lack of patience. So long as a man is away from that home at work, he can avoid facing the strain of the unending hours of work which has made employment with regular hours seem a haven to many women. By and large, society has not adequately taken into account the strain and fatigue which come from living under the same roof with one's job, from being constantly on call, from the everlasting "picking-up" that is part of every household routine. When this routine is not relieved by time away from home, there is no chance for perspective or for that relaxation necessary for the happy life of the family or for sound achievement for the mother or a sound relationship with her children. The problem for many women is still—how to secure enough relief from home responsibilities so that they have an opportunity to widen their interests and enrich their lives. Personal growth is an important component of vocational satisfaction. Many women are trying out new ways of doing work by co-operatively owned machinery or through cooperative projects for caring for children.

Woman's vocational satisfaction is tied in with the fulfillment of still other responsibilities. In an amazingly short time society has granted her political and educational, as well as economic, status. More girls than boys are graduating from high school and going on to college, and this education has widened women's field of interests as it formerly widened the interests of men. Woman can now enter practically any vocation she chooses, subject as yet to discrimination in opportunity and equal pay. She now must function not only as wife, mother, housekeeper, and economic partner, but as a person responsible to society for the expression of her own individuality. She is beginning to realize that she cannot with impunity deny or neglect interests and skills which are important to her. She must rather find ways of expressing them which do not conflict too much with her other responsibilities. She is beginning to recognize that she will make less unsound demands upon the emotions and achievements of her loved ones, if she finds within



herself those things which in the past she asked others to provide for her. Women are not yet sure of this new responsibility. They may refuse the new opportunities for development, or exploit them. There are many questions to answer; but the qualities of personality produced by the changes can enrich the life of the family.

Not only must women think in terms of their contribution to life during their earlier years, but they must recognize that life does not end at forty and plan to make the years after that milestone the richest and fullest of their experience. No woman now needs to live as though the happiest time of life is before thirty. The task of reconstructing society needs those individuals who can bring the discipline and maturity of their earlier life to the planning and carrying out of responsibility on a wider scale. After women's children have ceased to need their care, they may have as many as thirty or forty years in which to make an inestimable contribution to the building of a Christian social order. Society has little hope of reconstruction if older people cannot function in its remaking. Earlier life must of necessity offer too many hostages in terms of any *status quo* to take too much risk in its attempts at revolution. Real reconstruction can be dared only by those who have lived long enough to be able to take the chances involved.

## THE PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

O Mother, Noble Mother yet to come! How shall thy child point to the bright career of her of whom he boasts to be the son—Not for the service spent on him, but for the wisdom which has sent him forth a clear-brained, pure-souled, noble-hearted man, with health, and strength and beauty his by birth; And more for the wide record of her life, great work well done, that makes him praise her name and long to make as great a one his own!

—Charlotte Perkins Gilman

The home's greatest contribution has been and will continue to be to the lives of children. Parents' relationships to their children are among the richest and most rewarding aspects of their lives. In no phase of the life of the home is there more evident change in precept and practice than in the relationship of children to parents and to one another. It cannot be said too often that children need both parents. As men went out of the home to work, family life underwent a change of whose consequences we are only now beginning to be fully aware. The separation of men from the home meant for many men a divorce from the responsibilities and satisfactions of their former share in family life. They became the individuals who "supported" the family by the pay envelope. They became to many children "the man who sleeps in the house." Even when the father came home before the children were asleep he was often so fatigued that mothers used every



device to keep children from bothering him. Children thereby came to lose the relationship they had formerly had with their fathers. The tragic solution of suicide, sought by men who have lost their means of family support and see nothing to live for, is testimony to the seriousness of the man's problem. One of the hopeful elements in the life of the future is the possibility that fathers will have more time to spend in the home with their children.

In the meantime, we need to reexamine our attitudes toward children's need of their mothers. Women do bear a unique relation to children, inasmuch as neither biology nor human invention has as yet evolved a way by which men can bear the children. But after allowing for the period of child bearing, it is an open question as to how much of a mother's time should be spent with her children. That the full responsibility for the children's development falls to women is often a distinct liability, because of the temperamental differences and likenesses between them and their children. Sometimes a child fails to achieve a satisfactory relationship with his mother because he is temperamentally so different from her that she cannot understand, appreciate or direct his reactions to the situations he must face. On the other hand, she may be so like him in her own reactions to situations that she knows what he is going to do before he does it and so gives him no chance to be himself. She may be partial to the child most like her husband because she admires her husband's disposition in contrast with her own. Or, if she has had difficulty in making her adjustment to her husband's traits, a duplicate of him may receive all the emotional reactions produced by the two of them. It is for such reasons that most children need relationship with both father and mother.

The creativity—the "success"—of the mother's relationship to her child may be determined by the number of hours she has to adjust to living on the child's level. Delight in a child's happy chatter may turn to irritation if one can hear nothing but the child's conversation. Provision for the mother's being away from



little children for parts of a day may be as important for both mother and child as their being together.

Further, it must be admitted that not all mothers are equipped, by temperament and skill, to carry out adequately the routine of infant or child care. Nursery schools and kindergartens, which society will probably provide in increasing numbers, may offer as good or better care for children for parts of the day than they can secure from their own mothers. Factory production of clothing may insure for many children better fitting or more suitable clothing than would the work of the mother's needle, and at little, if any, added expense.

This analysis does not excuse those mothers who take small responsibility for their children's care and irresponsibly delegate physical, intellectual, and spiritual oversight to others. Such mothers are likely to cause difficulty for their children whether they are present or absent.

But, where children become a mother's major "job," they usually have to carry too heavy a responsibility for fulfilling her life as well as their own and so are hurt in the process. In the large families of former years, there was a certain amount of freedom afforded to children by their numbers and by the exacting responsibilities of the mother. There was, therefore, more chance for the children to develop their own lives in their own way.

We must also reconsider the responsibilities of the home for the education of children. The kind of education little children once received from one another in the home of the former large family is no longer possible. The development of birth control methods, the voluntary limitation of families and the economic limitations under which young people marry are making the average family of today two and a half children. For that reason, society is developing nursery schools in increasing numbers in order to give these children a chance to associate with their peers and to be relieved of the inevitable pressure of a world in which their associations are chiefly with adults. Where public education has not developed far enough to make provision

for pre-school children, mothers are planning for cooperative nursery schools and kindergartens where little children from a number of families may have a chance for the formation of attitudes fundamental to later experience.

While the school is taking more and more responsibility for the social development of children, these extracurricular activities are by no means limited to school. Camp fire, Scouts, 4-H Clubs, YM and YWCA's offer programs to provide education in democracy and in group responsibility. The schedule for many school children gives them little time at home except for sleep, and, as they grow older, sleeping hours also are invaded.

If the home meets its present responsibility for children's education, parents must take more community responsibility. They need to be alert to the strength or weakness of public school facilities. They may need to serve on local, county, and state boards of education where educational policies are decided. They need to serve as adult advisors or board members of the organizations to which their children belong as members. Such investment of time on the part of adults often brings them as rich returns as come to their children through the same organizations. There is less unsound competition between the home and organizations for a child's loyalty if the home shares the wider experience.

No factor affecting family life has changed more than the status of children. In the past the father was the head of the household after the European patriarchal pattern. Children were supposed to be "seen and not heard." The constant repression of natural impulses in children was reinforced by religious commandment, and civil law made it incumbent upon the child to honor and obey parents. Respect was demanded, even at the expense of honesty and emotional health. While such a system often led to revolt and rebellion on the part of children, it often developed sturdy character and real love and respect from children, when it was tempered by the sincere love of parent for the child. The picture in recent years has been reversed,



and children, instead of parents, have tended to become the center of the home. They have been encouraged to free expression of their desires, and discipline has often been frowned upon as bad taste. The result, as seen in many families, has been anarchy as a substitute for despotism.

The school life of children has been a factor in the lessening of parental authority. In schools, children become a community of their own in which adults are in the minority, and so children tend to develop their feeling of class solidarity and to reinforce their anti-parental revolution. This education away from home in school, as Dr. Levy has pointed out,\* very much reduced the importance of the father in the lives of the children. The father has not only gone out of the home to work, but he no longer is held to be the chief source of knowledge and power. The newer insights from child psychology have contributed to the lessened status of parents. As parents come to realize to what extent children become what their relationships with their parents make them, they are more likely to feel a sense of guilt about children's behaviour than to blame the children. It is thus impossible for them to expect the love and honor once

\**Child Study*, April 1934.



demanded from children. As contrasted with the former sense of uncontested parental authority, parents now have an increasing sense of inferiority.

The home is still undisputed as the place where children may best learn those things necessary for their development. It is the place where the basic learning in discipline should be acquired. Without external control, children are left with no means of bringing their own conflicting impulses into any kind of integration. Lack of necessary consideration for the desires of others tends toward a conflict among family members which exhibits the worst aspects of individualism as a philosophy of life. When freedom is confused with license and self-indulgence, children are deprived of essential elements in their education for independence and maturity in the wider areas of their life.

To face the inadequacies of the uncritical espousal of freedom for children is not thereby to go back to the older form of autocratic control. It is rather to recognize that sound relationships between children and parents can be built only by the give and take between them characteristic of a true rather than a pseudo-democracy. It is to hold fast to the truth that the child is a person, unique and self-determining, whose essential life dare not be determined or controlled by an external factor.

It is within the family that the child can come into an experience of "cooperative willing which implies the renunciation of arbitrariness on both sides" and can come to accept the necessary compulsions which are a part of the privileges of belonging in an organic relationship to other individuals. In the home the external compulsions necessary to self-control can be provided because they can be tempered with the love for whose sake renunciation of the individualistic impulses is made possible. In the home, there is opportunity for growth from irresponsible to responsible action, from impulsive to rational choice, from conformity to conviction. Such a relationship between parents and children involves time for being

together and a technique for joint discussion of those things about which there is agreement or disagreement. This is not always easy, for the use of language seems to have changed so that many a parent, who must perforce hear one end of a telephone conversation, feels he is listening to remarks in another tongue.

Both parents and children must recognize that there are many problems today which cannot be solved by the formulae of the past. Once it was possible to know what the "best" people did; now it is hard to know who the best people are and, whoever they are, they do not do the same things. In the shift from an economy of scarcity to one of plenty such virtues as thrift come into question. New knowledge has made necessary a reexamination of the standards of sex expression both before and after marriage. A depression, which denied young people the vocational opportunities which were open to their parents, and a war period, which drafts them to do jobs they did not choose, create many problems for which there is no precedent. Many a suitor for a daughter's hand, who cannot offer her father assurance either as to money he has saved on which to marry or a job by which to earn it for the future, may still be as good a marriage risk as was the father. In periods when young people face the difficulties of postponement of marriage, parents need to face with them the question of continued family subsidy. Many graduate schools are now recognizing that a student may do better work when married to, rather than when separated from, the girl to whom he is engaged. The separations and tensions caused by the war bring many difficult problems with far-reaching consequences. It is often impossible to know all of the factors necessary for assurance as to the soundness of a decision. In many cases, there may be less difficulty for those who are married than for those who are engaged. On the other hand, to marry the wrong person is just as serious now as if there were no emergency upon which to lay the blame. The young people, who today must face the threat of war to their future and must try to find a way

to face the temporary or permanent separation from the men they desire or might want to marry, need the deepest kind of understanding sympathy.

Probably the most important single contribution still within the function of the home to perform is that of giving to its members experience in the security of belonging to one another and of being of value to one another. Many a child has been saved from otherwise disastrous consequences of some action by the assurance of his parents' belief in him, even though the parents might have to disapprove of the specific act. This contribution to a sense of security and worth will never be a genuine one except as it is established and nurtured through the inevitable differences of interest and value, of opinion and conviction, which must be met in every normal family. Parents need to understand the essential integrity of life that seeks in varied ways to find its own expression in the personalities of their children.

The incontestable fact is that both parents and children need the interests and experience of the other. They may make a useful and even exciting contribution to one another, if they learn the techniques of talking and thinking together, each with respect for the experience different from his own and for the integrity of the other who differs.

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FAMILY

“ . . . . . A loftier race  
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise  
With flame of freedom in the souls  
And light of knowledge in their eyes.”

### 1. *As Consumer*

Since the family's role as consumer has supplanted that of producer, it is important that the family learn how to buy. All of its members need to be aware of the evils of such practices as credit or installment buying. It is necessary that women



learn to add and to subtract figures psychologically as well as practically. Josephine Lawrence's "If I Have Four Apples" gives an all too common picture of a family's lack of maturity as consumers.

An individual's standard of living depends not only on the number of dollars earned but also on the quantity and quality of the goods the dollars can buy. This consumer responsibility falls especially heavily on women since, according to marketing research experts, between 89 and 90 per cent of all spending is controlled by them. Women now buy rather than can their fruits and vegetables. But prices are small guide to quality; the same brand name may represent high quality in one part of the country and poor quality in another. Too seldom are consumer goods of any kind adequately labeled. Moreover, the choice of goods for which money is spent is influenced by advertising. But advertising is frequently influenced by private profit rather than by interest in the social good, and so is often intentionally misleading or dishonest. Legal control of advertising cannot be provided rapidly and effectively enough to insure protection against worthless and dangerous products: It is of the greatest importance, as Hope Williams of the U. S. Dept. of Labor reminds us, that the family of the future become "economically literate."

To learn how and what to buy has become so complicated a process that a single individual is practically helpless. Hence the need to avail oneself of consumers advisory services, whose function is to provide the technical guidance for consumers. Their ratings of products is made on the best judgments of technicians and consultants, with competence and freedom from commercial bias. This impartiality gives the consumer the chance to have his buying choices determined by technical tests, rather than by the cleverness of an advertising copy-writer or the ingenuity of a manufacturer in making a shoddy product look like a good one.

It is important, also, for all consumers who take their social responsibility seriously to know what goods are made under

fair labor conditions, so that they can throw the weight of their purchasing power on the side of their social convictions. Thus can consumers add their pressure to the fight for higher wages and for organization and collective bargaining. To wear a dress and use food prepared under conditions unsound to the worker is to share the guilt for the exploitation of human beings. Consumers Cooperatives augment the buying power of a single family by gathering together whole communities of buyers who demand high quality goods at fair prices, with due consideration of conditions under which they are made. The formation of Consumer Cooperatives is a step which is being taken by families in many communities. These cooperative societies are groups of people who unite for the purposes of production, of buying or of selling or for credit or loan purposes. Such enterprises have been growing until they include recreation, health, education and many other aspects of family life on an inclusive basis.

## *2. For Community and World Problems*

The problems that must be faced by the modern family are so largely social in their origin that any real solution of them demands that members of all families must cooperatively attack the larger social issues. Young people and adults as well need to accept responsibility for the life of the communities in which they must live. Not only are no children physically safe in a community which has not been immunized against small pox or typhoid, but they are not spiritually safe where there are racial and class frictions and hatreds. To belong to the favored few in a physical or spiritual epidemic is often to have less resistance to the ravages of the disease. When a fire starts, "a privileged home" is not safe in its path. In the conflagration of war that has now reached world proportions, no home is safe or can be safe until the fire is stopped and the causes of its recurrence removed. No longer can any parent give thanks that his children are too old or too young to be drafted for service. The babies of the last war are fighting this war. The babies of

today will bear its marks throughout their lives. The hands that rock the cradle must know how to defend the cradle's occupants from the inescapable wages of isolation and self-sufficiency in an economically inter-related world.

No family life can be sound where the family wage is below the minimum for physical needs, where men and women work for inadequate compensation or under conditions of constant fear and insecurity. No children are safe in an economic system which, even in the democracies like Great Britain, France, and the United States, achieved the highest standard of living the world has ever known for only 30 to 40 per cent of their people. They cannot be safe in this country as long as 66 per cent of the families have an income of \$835 when it is estimated that \$1200 is necessary to provide a minimum standard of living for a family of four. Children are not safe in a system which, before we began to make materials of war, had millions of youth unwanted by society, and millions more of their elders who were deprived of their right to work. The nation can no longer face these threats to the basic security of family life.

Those who have carried responsibility for the feeding of the family know that no nation which produces an oversupply of cotton is safe when one-third of its citizens are ill-clothed; when one-third of its citizens are living in mining patches, in slums and alley houses; when one-third of its citizens are ill-fed; when we plow crops under; when 80 per cent of the population is unable to obtain adequate medical care; when 600,000 children die each year from diseases which might have been prevented; when social, political and religious minorities are afraid in the face of inequalities of opportunity and discriminations which make them resort to actions which are the result of their fear.

Life for the family can be safe in the future only as the energy of all of its members goes into the solution of the problems affecting the whole people. No nation can exist economically or spiritually half slave and half free. All of the strands must be woven together into the fabric of life or the



whole will ravel. If one denies life to his neighbor, his own sooner or later will suffer. Each man's life is enriched only by a way of life which includes his neighbor.

Since the family's opinions are now formed to a large extent by newspaper and radio reports of vital issues, it is most important that we understand how to analyze and interpret news. Otherwise we may become the victims of hurried, and sometimes of sinister, attempts to picture highly complex situations in headline or five-minute copy.

Women, whose major function historically has been to deal with relationships between people, have not yet awakened to their responsibility to think of a world society. Without their contribution, the plans for such a society cannot be complete. Just as the family once protected itself against the threat of wild beasts or marauders on a local scale, it is not safe today unless it finds protection on an international scale. Just as every family is in some way inescapably involved in the war, even as the war must be won to save family life from desecration, it is more than ever necessary, as Dr. Lindeman points out, to teach the truth of the Chinese proverb that "only those who hate war will be able to win this one." Only they dare be allowed to win it. We must hate the war we wage or we shall become what we destroy.

## RELIGION IN THE FAMILY

We should remember that the gravest truths may be gathered from a very narrow compass of information. God is revealed in his smallest work as truly as in his greatest. The principle of human nature may be studied better in a family than in a history of the world. The finite is a manifestation of the infinite.

—William Ellery Channing

One of the most marked changes in the life of the family is in the area of religion. The family altar and religious instruction are no longer characteristic of most homes. Whatever instruction is to be given, or whatever religious practices are to be carried on, have been delegated to the church. Few parents attempt to talk about religion with their children—fewer succeed in having their children say prayers after six years of age. One of the basic causes for this silence is the changing intellectual life of the present. Everywhere are new intellectual horizons. Life has been enlarged horizontally and vertically. New discoveries of science have challenged old ideas of heaven and hell, of God and man. Old ideas of individual punishment and reward are not adequate for our new sense of social guilt and social salvation.

In the area of moral and religious standards parents are the "lost generation." Their standards were formulated in a world which no longer exists; they have not yet lived long enough in the present one to have worked out for themselves the necessary modifications. In homogeneous groups living in a relatively stable environment, moral standards are definitely fixed and generally accepted. When, however, prevailing culture and moral ideals prove to be false to man's needs, he is likely to become cynical and to experience a sense of frustration. We are now asking with new insistence: How does one know what is right? How can he do what he knows? How shall he be saved from frustration and despair? Growing out of such demorali-

zation comes an interest in and search for authority which will give confidence and a sense of direction and meaning for life. The revolt from authority, characteristic of a child-centered approach to education, is now swinging back to what may become an infantile reliance on authority, unless we can find a more mature basis of confidence and security.

This lack of conviction on the part of adults about the values which make or break life is a major handicap for the adolescents of today. To make choices one must have alternatives which may be weighed and chosen. To ask youth to think in a moral and spiritual vacuum is to ask them to make intellectual bricks without straw. We cannot expect present-day parents who have not made their own religious adjustments to create in their homes a truly religious atmosphere in terms of current conceptions and convictions.

Our experience of the universe is more rich and marvelous and our relation to it less narrowly personal than was our grandfathers' to their world. We have a new sense of concern for the life of our world. A six-year-old, brought up to accept responsibility in nursery and kindergarten, was urged to ask God to take care of her and to make her a good girl. Her reply was not lacking in reverence when she said, "No, I think I won't tonight. I've depended on God about long enough now. I'm going to try it myself a while." Many of our forms of petition will be strangely meaningless to this youngster who at six paid God the compliment of an assumption of responsibility not always accepted by adults. We can not be fair to her, however, unless we open up to her the real meaning of our larger dependence upon the resources of God mediated through nature and our fellows. We and our children face, in not less but in greater degree, the mysteries of birth and death and of life itself. Parents must understand the essential seriousness of youth which is sometimes covered by marks of frivolity, of revolt, or of sophistication.

Parents and children together need to work out their interpretation of religion. This is the present function of the

family altar. It has ever been the place where a family spoke together of God. Today that communion is more necessary than ever before. What we say of Him should be phrased less in terms of the creeds and precepts of the past, and more in terms of our own intellectual and emotional relation to the facts of existence as we experience them. This will come out of more, rather than less, study of the records of man's religious experience in the past, and from an increasing realization of our place in the historic stream of man's search for God. We need to see religion, not as an escape from our own individual or social responsibility, but as the resource for meeting and solving all of the problems of our living together. We must recapture the sense of personal worth and significance which is inherent in our being children of God. We are incomplete until we find for ourselves the sense of comradeship and love that comes from an honest dedication to the cause of Jesus and the fellowship that comes to us as members of a Christian community and citizens of the world. We yearn for a place of refreshment and inspiration, where we can be so aware of our relationship to others that we can dare to face ourselves and to be alone.

All of this experience is religious education. Much of it can be done more effectively in the home than anywhere else.

## CONCLUSION

The home of the type of our grandparents no longer exists; but there need not be regret that the old structure has changed, if thereby new and richer opportunities for the development of the lives of individuals result. Modern conditions have brought new problems but also new possibilities to home life. Husband and wife, parents and children, in the home of today may realize those possibilities, if their life together can be such as to make it easier for them to recognize their relationship with all their fellows and with the totality of life in which and



through which their individual lives come to have meaning and significance.

If peace can be established in the midst of the conflicting needs and demands of family life, if immaturity can be led into maturity without violation either of its need for autonomy or its need for unity, the foundations of mature social and political solidarity will be laid. Such values can be projected to world proportions only by those whose character structure makes possible that projection. If family life fails to provide these experiences, one sees no hope for the world. Therefore, in the midst of insecurity, of frustration and of the tragic nature of the present hour, we must see to it that children of today find security, purpose, and hope in their family relationships. In no other way can a new world come into being.

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## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RURAL FAMILY

BY THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP

Fifty million Americans live outside the cities. About two-fifths of the people, living on farms or in towns of less than 2,500 population, constitute the rural families of the nation. Many rural families are practically like urban families but most farm households have distinctive characteristics of their own. The members of the family work side by side on the "family-size farm" where there is an opportunity for mutual understanding and learning in the solution of daily problems; and

where work, play and intimate family associations contribute to personality development.

In rural areas, particularly on the small farms, much manual

labor is required. Work

contributes to the develop-

ment of character by en-

couraging resourcefulness,

industry, responsibility, re-

gard for physical strength,

punctuality, perseverance,

thrift and simplicity. The

abundance of space and a

minimum of commercial-

ized recreation in many

rural communities have a

tendency to stimulate the

creative use of leisure time.



### *Rural Psychology and the Rural Family*

Human nature is largely the same everywhere. The basic emotions and needs of persons have little regard for environment. However, vocations and outward circumstances do condition the inner reactions and life of rural and urban families.

The rural family varies from class to class, from region to region and from time to time in keeping with differences in rural psychology. During recent years, the rural mind has been changing because the modes of rural living are moving away from the simple frontier patterns. While manual labor and family-farming still exist in wide areas of America, the rural family is being conditioned, in many cases, by the machine age and the industrial revolution in agriculture.

The family in the small town is changing, also. Some towns are still the provincial abode of local gossips and many have succumbed to the onward march of civilization. However, thousands of them stand astride the great transcontinental

highways which bring the pulsing life of the nation through their main streets and into their homes.

The rural family is surrendering to the influences of modern transportation, communication and labor-saving machinery. These improvements will enrich the life of rural communities if their leaders are prepared to deal patiently with the families in backward neighborhoods and to direct those which are being subjected to the expanding forces of civilization in advanced communities.

### *The Peasant Family*

In its simplest form, the rural family may be illustrated best by the psychology of the peasant farmer. A peasant is one who is tied to a piece of land by relative poverty and social habit. He loves and cares for the soil as he does his own life. He has an attachment to place and is bound to it by ties which prevent a desire for escape. His neighbors, whether loved or hated, are an intricate part of his life. The birth, growth and death of living things are constantly before his eyes. Seasons and other cosmic forces beyond his control impinge upon his vocation.

His own physical reactions are important to the peasant. He enjoys his own bodily sensations of seeing, smelling, tasting, hearing and feeling. The mysteries of life and death abide in his environment and are revealed, not only through an awe-inspired faith which may be largely an expression of a natural religion without any relation to traditional Christianity, but also by the experiences of flexing the muscles in labor, of struggling with the forces of nature, of hating or befriending in neighborhood processes and of fulfilling his biological functions. The peasant family takes its character from these attitudes.

The peasant father walks upon the clean bottom of the furrow which he makes in the firm earth and feels a close relationship to the sweating animals that pull the plow. The tremor of the crumbling soil, as it slides off the glistening

mouldboard, gives him a sense of victory over nature. To plow a field is to change the face of the earth; to turn it with a clean furrow is to achieve the satisfactions of an artist or a precision tool-maker. Such experiences affect the thought patterns and social customs of the peasant and his family.

The peasant family depends upon the microcosm of the clod which holds the precious fertility for its food and waits upon the macrocosm of the Universe which determines the round of seasons. The peasant looks up into the face of the frowning cloud which threatens to turn his fields into swamps in the rainy season and gazes longingly at the cloudless sky in time of drought. Extremes of nature become forces beyond his control. Figuratively, he bows his head in gratitude to the forces which bring the rain or sun at the right times. He curses them defiantly when drought or flood, heat or frost defy his calculations. Finally, he may be forced to drop his hands and tools in resignation, admitting defeat before drought, flood or blizzard. Then, with the coming of a new season, hope arises within him and he tries again, ever trusting that "this year will be better." The peasant family, more than any other, is in touch with the rhythm of the Universe.

Holding the handles of a victorious plow in personal combat with the earth, the husbandman or his son has thoughts that are unknown to the relatively passive operator of a speeding machine. Required to cope with the unleashed elements of the physical universe, the peasant family is bound to develop an outlook on life which is different from that which derives from an air-conditioned existence.

### *The Family of Machine-Farmers*

The industrial revolution has reached agriculture and the farm family. The value of farm equipment in the United States exceeds 3 billion dollars, invested in more than 1,500,000 tractors, each accompanied by a full complement of machines for plowing, cultivating, fertilizing and harvesting. Every sixth farm home has electrical power and light. Under the wheels



of these machines farms are often merely "factories in the field."

What does the machine do to the farmer's family? The mechanized farmer is no longer the man in the furrow who thrills to the tremor of the crumbling earth. Instead, his body surges to the rhythm of the vibrating machine. He is more remote from the soil than the peasant and often closer to the spirit of the city. Land, to him, is a resource to be exploited for wealth. He is a capitalist. More and more acres are demanded by his huge enterprise. He copes with the weather, as the peasant must, and also with the risks of substantial investments. Once he has sapped the life out of a field he may cast it aside as he would a worn-out machine.

The family on the mechanized farm comes to feel its kinship to the city which is the market for its products. Moreover, machines take the burden off the backs of the farmer and his family, leaving energy and time for cultural pursuits. If it cares to do so, this type of family has time to attend church, read, travel and enjoy the fellowship of town and city people. To understand the family of the machine farmer, it is necessary to know something of the home life of the businessman. The capitalist-farmer is caught between two economies, rural and urban, and belongs to neither one. Those who would help his family should be on the lookout for conflicts due to the dual and transitional nature of its relationships.

Between the peasant and the machine-farmer is the vast majority of "average" farmers who have some of the qualities of both. It is with this wide variety that programs for the farm home must deal and to which adaptations must be made.

### *The Small Town Family*

The attitudes of the average small town family are on the black-list in many quarters. It is true that there are limited minds in many villages where gossip, small talk and factional disputes are cherished. However, urban provincialism, in the midst of apartment house living, and interest-group participa-

tion which takes the place of the neighborhood processes of smaller communities are not unknown.

In any event, the small town may be a good place to rear a family. Over 23 million "non-farm" rural persons in America live in communities of less than 2,500 population and most of them reside in the 19,000 villages and hamlets. While many small towns are literally slums, most of them are lively neighborhoods. Who has not admired a quiet village of tree-lined residential streets, modest homes, an occasional mansion, good schools and little churches, with tall spires marking the place for miles around?

Town families live close together. They are tied to each other by civic pride and proximity. Although class and race differences may separate some of them, village families tend to have the sense of community. While not all of them share in significant social processes, most of them are likely to be influenced by the same leadership and to "know what is going on."

Town families have mixed characteristics. They usually enjoy the conveniences of city homes and, at the same time, the space for living derived from their relation to the farm. On the other hand, they often need greater interests, wider contacts with the world and better co-ordination of their cultural facilities. They frequently need more provision for recreation for youth, economic opportunity for old and young, and functional religion for all. But, when everything is taken into account, village families may be approached by those who would help them as a community of homes more readily than is possible in either the farming areas or the cities.

### *Serving the Rural Family*

The care of rural families is important to city institutions and to the nation. Much of the urban population comes from town and country homes. According to O. E. Baker of the Department of Agriculture, 10 adults in the large cities are raising an average of 7 children, while 10 adults in the farm population rear approximately 14 offspring. The dying out of urban

families and the surplus birth rates of rural families serve to increase the significance of rural homes. Farm families alone pay about 12 billion dollars every 10 years to feed, clothe and educate the youth who migrate to urban centers. The quality of family life in rural areas is important, not only to the farm and village communities but to cities as well. A program for the whole church, and for all other agencies, in behalf of the rural family is worthy of careful consideration.

1. There should be a nation-wide effort to insure economic security for the farm and village population in order that the rural family may have the greatest possible access to the rights and goods of the American way of life. This effort should be designed to assist families in making the best use of what they have. Home gardens, especially on the farms, and the proper use of available food for an adequate diet may be more necessary lessons for some families than how to increase income.

2. Rural families need every possible encouragement in their efforts to attain cultural satisfactions. Mere organizational activity may not be enough. More community-wide participation by *all* members of *all* families of *all* classes is required. Most rural communities have better cultural facilities than they use and the main problem is to spread these services to all families—to those “across the tracks” and on the isolated farms, as well as to those of more fortunate condition and location. In general, rural people—particularly farmers—do not have schools, libraries, medical care and agencies for training for parenthood equal to the national average. No program for rural families will be adequate if it omits the problems of an equitable cultural opportunity for all of them.

3. Rural families must have a satisfactory spiritual development. Meaningful religion requires an adequate church, trained religious leadership and helpful Christian literature for the home. The church must be adapted to the life of the people and it must be *in* the community where they live. A church in the trade center or city, no matter if the distance from the

rural home is not great, may not suffice. Religion is largely a matter of "neighboring" and of family cooperation. Trained leadership means pastors who understand the families and their problems, combined with a willingness and an ability to lead parents and youth in worthy home life. Good literature signifies more than a "theological" magazine or an ecclesiastical "house-organ"; it means materials that will meet the problems of individual persons and family groups in the social setting of community living in such a way that they may grow in character and in the development of a normal household religion.

The nature and importance of the rural family in the life of the nation demand that it be treated with earnestness and maintained with dignity.

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## DEFENDING THE HOME BY STRENGTHENING LEGISLATION

"A democratic society has no power to survive unless its children are born and reared under conditions which make for strong, intelligent, resourceful and devoted citizens," declares Katharine L. Lenroot, Chief of the U. S. Children's Bureau, in her recommendations for 1942. "Responsible parenthood," she continues, "is the first requisite in the nurture and training of children. But the degree to which childhood is safe and happy is also dependent upon the conditions of community living and the community services which are available to supplement home care."

During this period when the resources of the nation are being mobilized for the total defense of all that we hold dear, the following steps should be taken in order to make sure that children everywhere in the United States receive full protection and service for their safety, health and well-being:



### *A Program for Local Communities*

Development of coordinated planning and action for children with the participation of both public and private health and welfare agencies and citizens' groups and with the stimulation from local councils of defense, councils of social agencies and other resources for community leadership . . . to provide:

1. Complete maternity care for all mothers who cannot obtain such care through their own resources.
2. Continuous health supervision for all children.
3. Medical, surgical and dental care as needed for all children.
4. Protective foods needed for good nutrition, at home and through school lunch programs.
5. Adequate programs of general relief and aid to dependent children.
6. Social service to help conserve home life, prevent delinquency, and deal with the problem of home and school relationships.
7. Adequate facilities and personnel for schooling and recreation.

### *A Program for the States*

Full consideration, by the State Council of Defense, of the needs of children.

Maintenance and strengthening, where needed, of state services to local units of government and of direct state services for promoting the safety, health and well-being of children.

Special consideration to meet new or intensified problems of child welfare. Examples of such problems are:

*Strengthening*, where necessary, and full enforcement of compulsory school attendance and child labor laws.

*Providing* proper care and supervision for children of working mothers.

*Assuring* the safety of children in case of external attack.

## *A Program for the Federal Government*

Action required to make sure that the needs of children receive full consideration in all fields of defense planning.

Increased appropriation to the Children's Bureau for advisory and consultation service to state agencies and for full enforcement of the child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Provisions of federal aid to state agencies of health and welfare to enable them to develop needed local resources to mothers and children in defense areas.

The last point is amplified by Niles Carpenter, Dean of the School of Social Work, University of Buffalo:

"For the services that will have to be improvised in the mushroom defense towns and military camp communities, particularly in those areas where voluntary social work is practically unknown, all the imagination and statesmanship of which lay and professional leadership is capable must be mobilized. To neglect those areas is to jeopardize not only the well-being of today's children but to endanger the vitality of our national life. The maintenance of the health and welfare of our children is social priority number one."

A child welfare program, however, is not complete unless the needs of all the family are taken into account. The Social Security Act, written into the law of the United States in August 1935, and amended in 1939, is a move in that direction. By protecting workers and their families from the hazards of unemployment and old age and from the hardships due to the loss of the family wage earner, the Social Security Act benefits the child, the family and the community. Now with the United States involved in a World War, the necessity for strengthening the Social Security program becomes greater.\*

The situation in the United States as of November, 1941, has been succinctly stated by Beulah Amidon: "At present, old age and survivors' insurance covers about 40,000,000 men and women employed in some 2,000,000 enterprises. The suggested

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\*The April 1942 issue of *Social Action* will discuss the present Social Security Act and analyze the various measures for its improvement now being considered by Congress.

extension of coverage would bring about 27,000,000 additional workers into the scheme, including 7,000,000 farm operators, 4,000,000 agricultural workers, 2,500,000 household employes, 1,000,000 employes of non-profit agencies, 3,500,000 casual laborers, 4,500,000 employes of state and local governments and some 5,000,000 self-employed persons."

The experience of the last few years has proved that social security makes people more able and effective defenders of democracy. Great Britain, for example, has forged ahead in social security in spite of and because of the war. The United States would do well to follow the lead of that beleaguered nation whose "most significant extension and improvements to an already comprehensive system were enacted even as the bombs were falling."

—Compiled by Katharine Terrill

## THE FAMILY — A READING LIST

—COMPILED BY L. FOSTER WOOD

### I. GENERAL

*Education for Family Life*, Nineteenth Yearbook, American Association of School Administrators. 1941. 368 pp. \$2.00.

*Family Finance*, by Howard F. Bigelow, Lippincott, 1937, 519 pp. \$3.00. Based on an analysis of social and economic factors.

*Marriage for Moderns*, by Henry A. Bowman, McGraw-Hill, 1942. 493 pp. \$3.00. Significant new book that seeks to aid the college student in getting ready for marriage.

*Of Men and Women*, by Pearl S. Buck, John Day, 1941, 203 pp. \$2.00. Mrs. Buck's comparison of the home in China and in America is particularly interesting. Her discussion of women and war, education and the old issue of women in politics is intelligent and fresh.

*Religion and the Home*, by George A. Buttrick, Federal Council of Churches, 1940. 8 pp. 5c. An appeal to churches and to families to revitalize religion in and through the home.

*There's No Place Like Home*, by James Lee Ellenwood, Scribners, 1938, 234 pp. \$2.00. A human and intimate presentation of everyday life in the family.



*A Christian View of Marriage*, Federal Council of Churches, 1940, 24 pp. 10c. General interpretation and practical suggestions.

*The Family and Its Social Functions*, by Ernest R. Groves, Lippincott, 1940, 631 pp. \$4.75. Personality factors studied in terms of the relation of the family to society and the impact of society upon the family. Meaning of marriage for the individual and for the community.

*Christian Family Life Education*, International Council of Religious Education, 1940, 64 pp. 25c. A guide for professional workers in family and parent education.

*Modern Marriage*, M. Jung, editor, Crofts, 1940, 420 pp. \$3.75. Frank, enlightened discussion by experts. Represents the valuable University of Iowa course on the family. A good background book for the minister and religious educator and for thoughtful young people.

*One Generation and Another*, by Robert Russell Wicks, Scribners, 1939, 191 pp. \$1.50. Emphasizes home atmosphere, the value of family traditions and the power of personal influences.

## II. FOR PARENTS

*When Children Ask*, by Margueritte Harmon Bro, Willett, Clark, 1940, 268 pp. \$2.00. The inquiring mind of childhood is presented effectively and understandingly.

*We the Parents*, by Sidonie M. Gruenberg, Harpers, 1939, 296 pp. \$2.50. Emphasizes personal relations of understanding and affection as wholesome correctives of over-rigid schedules of child training which have been offered.

*Parents Can Learn*, by Helen Ellwanger Hanford, Holt, 1940, 263 pp. \$1.75. An unusually helpful and encouraging book on parents and children living together as growing persons.

*Achieving a Christian Home Today*, by Hayward and Hayward, Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1935, 39 pp. 10c. A study course.

*Creating Friendly Attitudes Through the Home*, by Grace W. McGavran, Friendship Press, 1941, 47 pp. 25c. A series of articles with questions for discussion for home reading; for parents' classes; parent-teacher associations and teachers' meetings.

*Parents Are Teachers*, by Harry C. Munro, Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1940, 48 pp. 15c. Helps parents in meeting their responsibility as teachers for Christian living in the home.

*Understanding Children*, by Lewis J. Sherrill, Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1939, 218 pp. \$1.25. Emphasizing the understanding of children particularly in respect to growth in personality and character. Presents clearly the significance of home influence and relationships.



## III. FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

*Marriage and the Family*, by Ray E. Baber, McGraw-Hill, 1939, 656 pp. \$4.00. Changes in family patterns, marriage laws, courtship, husband-wife relations, child training, divorce and the conservation of family values.

*From Friendship to Marriage*, by Roy A. Burkhardt, Harpers, 1937, 161 pp. \$1.50. On the choice of a life mate.

*Youth and the Homes of Tomorrow*, by Edwin T. Dahlberg, Judson (rev. 1940), 160 pp. 60c. Courtship, postponed marriages, wedding and honeymoon, parenthood, work, play and religion.

*Sex Life of Youth*, by Grace L. Elliott and Harry Bone, Association Press, 1939, 146 pp. cloth, \$1.25; paper, 75c. Popular and widely used.

*Plan for Marriage*, Joseph K. Folsom, Editor, Harpers, 1938, 305 pp. \$3.00. Marriage from biological, psychological, economic, cultural and religious points of view.

*Marriage*, by Ernest R. Groves, Holt (rev. 1941), 671 pp. \$3.20. A university textbook marked by comprehensiveness and insight, and illuminated by a wealth of case material.

*Personality and the Family*, by Hornell and Ella Hart, Heath, 1935, 381 pp. \$2.80. Penetrating insight into problems of young people.

## IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Family Life, Parenthood and Young People's Relationships; A Selected Book List. Federal Council of Churches, 1941, 31 pp. 15c.

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At a time when war breeds intolerance, the Council for Social Action is particularly happy to introduce the artist who designed the new cover which appears with this issue, as well as the illustrations for the articles. Bunji Tagawa was born in Tokyo and is a graduate of Kansas University. He came to this country in 1922, at the urgent suggestion of his father, who has been a member of the Japanese Diet more or less continuously for the past thirty years. Mr. Tagawa's father and several other members of his family have suffered frequent imprisonment in Japan on account of their opposition to the army clique in Japanese politics. Mr. Tagawa inherits a liking and aptitude for art from his maternal grandfather, who was one of the first artists to introduce Western art to Japan.